

Memo



To: Mayor and Council
From: Shirley A. Freeman, Director of Finance/Administration
Date: February 4, 2015
Subject: Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee Recommendations

Town of Bluffton
 20 Bridge Street
 PO Box 386
 Bluffton, SC 29910
 843.706.4500
 843.757.6720 (fax)

Recommendation: In accordance with the grant process, the Accommodations Tax Advisory Committee met on February 3, 2015, to review the quarterly grant applications and have made the following recommendations for Council's consideration of grant awards:

Requesting Organization	Amount Requested	Amount Recommended
Farmers Market of Bluffton, Inc	46,800	7,149
The Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce-Taste of Bluffton	28,787	7,149
Total	\$ 75,587	\$ 14,298

Background: When comparing the State and Local Accommodations Taxes collections for the quarter ending December 2014 to the same quarter last year, the revenues are down \$14,894 or 11%.

The total funds currently available for distribution are \$14,298 as outlined below.

State ATAX		Local ATAX	
Remaining from Previous Quarters	\$ (16,970)	Remaining from Previous Quarters	\$ (33,478)
2nd Quarter Revenue	48,159	2nd Quarter Revenue	70,335
General Fund		8% to Visitor's Convention Bureau	(5,627)
5% to General Fund	(2,408)	Disaster Recovery Designation	(703)
30% to HHI-Bluffton Chamber	(14,448)	38% to Town's CIP	(24,322)
Pending State Correction	(6,240)		

Total State ATAX Funds Remaining for Distribution	\$ 8,093
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Total Local ATAX Funds Remaining for Distribution	\$ 6,205
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The Committee Meeting minutes are attached for your review. A listing of previously funded grants is attached for your convenience as well.

FY 2014 ATAX Grant Report
2/4/2015

FY2014 Grants	Amount Requested	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Source of Funding	Paid FY2014	Paid FY 2015	Remaining	Grant #
Applications Received June 30, 2013								
Bluffton Historical Preservation Society	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 110,000	State ATAX	\$ 80,000	\$ 30,000	\$ -	S001
Old Town Bluffton Merchants Society	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	Local ATAX	\$ 9,000		\$ -	L002
Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	Local ATAX	\$ 20,000		\$ -	L004
HHI-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce (Outdoor Billboard Campaign)	\$ 22,300	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	Local ATAX	\$ 15,000		\$ -	L008
Total Grants for 1st Quarter Payments	\$ 81,300	\$ 74,000	\$ 154,000		\$ 124,000	\$ 30,000	\$ -	
Applications Received September 30, 2013								
Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce - Taste of Bluffton	\$ 15,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 15,000	Local ATAX	\$ 15,000		\$ -	L013
Lowcountry Tourism Commission & Lowcountry Visitors Center & Museum	\$ 11,700	\$ 11,700	On Hold for next quarter					
Total Grants for 2nd Quarter Payments	\$ 26,700	\$ 19,200	\$ 15,000		\$ 15,000	\$ -	\$ -	
Applications Received December 31, 2013								
Beaufort County Black Chamber of Commerce	\$ 40,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500	Local ATAX	\$ 7,500		\$ -	L006
<i>The Farmers Market of Bluffton</i>	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	Local ATAX	\$ 4,502	\$ 22,474	\$ 3,024	L005
HHI-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce Recreation Co-Op Program	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,000	Local ATAX	\$ 35,000		\$ -	L009
Lowcountry Tourism Commission & Lowcountry Visitors Center & Museum	\$ 11,700	\$ 11,700	On Hold					
Old Town Bluffton Merchants Society	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	Local ATAX	\$ 18,000		\$ -	L002
The May River Theatre Company	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 12,000	Local ATAX	\$ 12,000		\$ -	L003
Total Grants for 3rd Quarter Payments	\$ 146,700	\$ 114,200	\$ 102,500		\$ 77,002	\$ 22,474	\$ 3,024	
Applications Received March 31, 2014								
Beaufort County Black Chamber of Commerce	\$ 32,500	\$ -	\$ 2,800	Local ATAX	\$ 2,800		\$ -	L006
HHI-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce (Southern Living Campaign)	\$ 36,000	\$ 36,000	\$ 36,000	Local ATAX		\$ 36,000	\$ -	L010
Old Town Bluffton Merchants Society	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	\$ 9,000	Local ATAX	\$ 9,000		\$ -	L002
Society of Bluffton Artists	\$ 15,000	\$ 9,800	\$ 9,800	Local ATAX		\$ 6,630	\$ 3,170	L007
Total Grants for 4th Quarter Payments	\$ 92,500	\$ 54,800	\$ 57,600		\$ 11,800	\$ 42,630	\$ 3,170	
Grand Total	\$ 347,200	\$ 262,200	\$ 329,100		\$ 227,802	\$ 95,104	\$ 6,194	

FY 2015 ATAX Grant Report
2/4/2015

FY 2015 Grant Requests	Amount Requested	Advisory Committee Recommendation	Town Council Approved	Source of Funding	Paid FY2014	Paid FY 2015	Remaining	Grant #
Applications Received June 30, 2014								
Celebrate Bluffton, Inc - extension granted	\$ 2,660	\$ 2,660	\$ 2,660	Local ATAX	\$ 1,885		\$ 776	L014
Historic Bluffton Arts & Seafood Festival, Inc	\$ 23,000	\$ 23,000	\$ 23,000	Local ATAX		\$ 23,000	\$ -	L004
Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce - Boiled Peanut Festival	\$ 15,730	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000	Local ATAX	\$ 6,000		\$ -	L013
NIBCCA	\$ 25,000	\$ -	\$ -					
Old Town Bluffton Merchants Society	\$ 48,000	\$ 10,883	\$ 10,883	Local ATAX	\$ 3,589	\$ 7,294	\$ -	L002
Total Grants for 1st Quarter Payments	\$ 114,390	\$ 42,543	\$ 42,543		\$ 11,474	\$ 30,294	\$ 776	
Applications Received September 30, 2014								
Bluffton Historical Preservation Society	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	State ATAX		\$ 23,258	\$ 76,742	S001
Old Town Bluffton Merchants Society	\$ 37,117	\$ 37,117	\$ 37,117	Local ATAX		\$ 6,559	\$ 30,558	L002
Total Grants for 2nd Quarter Payments	\$ 137,117	\$ 137,117	\$ 137,117		\$ -	\$ 29,817	\$ 107,300	
Grand Total								
	\$ 251,507	\$ 179,660	\$ 179,660		\$ 11,474	\$ 60,111	\$ 108,076	

ACCOMMODATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
FEBURARY 3, 2015

Chairman Anthony called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Other committee members present were Gardner, Hughes, Reichert, Reeves, and Wood. Staff in attendance was as follows: Director of Finance Freeman, Assistant Director of Finance Greathouse, and Town Clerk Lunceford.

The total funds available for distribution are \$14,298.

Committee Approval and Recommendation to Town Council on Applicant's Requests as follows:

1. Farmers Market of Bluffton, Inc. – Annual Request of \$46,800:

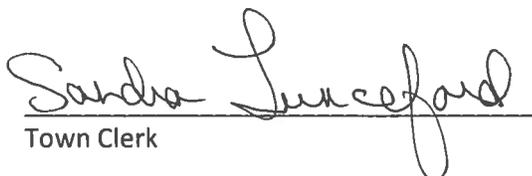
Kim Viljac, Market Manager, stated their revised request increase of \$12,800 is for an addition officer on the request of the Bluffton Police Department. The Police Department stated that two officers are needed instead of the one on the original request. The requested funds will be used for advertising, traffic control, public restrooms and trash removal. There ensued a discussion regarding the omission of the trash and restrooms in the budget expenses for the ATAX funded expenses. Later after Kim Viljac had reviewed the budget, she stated that ATAX funds did not need to be adjusted up for theses expenses. The Market relies on rack cards and posters that are placed in hotels, welcome centers, stores and businesses throughout the area and on advertising in visitor publications, magazines, newspapers, radio, WHHI, web site, etc. to inform the public. Besides the requested funding from the Accommodations Tax funds, the Market continues to explore additional support through grant writing, sponsorships, merchandise sales, vendor fees and tent rental fees.

2. The Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce – \$28,787:

Erin Black, Office Administrator, and Joe Nehila, Marketing Committee Chairman, gave an overview for the 2015 Taste of Bluffton. Local restaurants in the Greater Bluffton Community will be showcasing their culinary cuisine by offering "a taste" to the public for a minimal price. The event will be held on April 11, 2015. The funds will be used for out of the area marketing. Tourism statistics are derived from South Living, SC Living, and the Island Packet on how many people inquired on the Taste of Bluffton. Other sources of funds will be sponsors and vendors.

Wood moved to grant \$7,149 to the Farmers Market of Bluffton and \$7,149 to the Greater Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, totally \$14,298, and with the option of resubmitting for the balance not funded on the next quarter. Reichert seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.


Town Clerk